

Governor's Advisory Council for Veteran Services

Arrowheads Community Club, Building 9-65

Fort Indiantown Gap

Annville, Pennsylvania 17003

March 27, 2019

Aging Committee

Mr. Brian Natali

Aging Committee Update



Aging Committee: Joan Stakem and Samantha Cossman (co-chairs)

Subcommittee met on: 12/19 email; 1/16 conference call; 2/20 in-person

Name	Affiliation
Joan Stakem	DMVA
Samantha Cossman	PDA (PA Link)
Brian Natali	DMVA
Tim Cleveland	Tioga Co. Veterans Affairs
Kit Watson	American Legion
James Fearn	DHS (OLTL)
Ben Laudermilch	DHS (Housing)
Christopher Kemmerer	DCNR (State Parks)
Larry Furlong	Fish and Boat
Jamie Dunlap / Sarah Merritt	PA Council on the Arts
Kevin Longenecker (new)	PDA
Tami Featherlin (new)	DMVA
Kimberly Sell-Shemansky (new)	VISN 4
Catherine Johnson	TAA

Aging Committee (continued)

Vision Statement

**Expand awareness of and access to
services, supports, benefits, and opportunities
for Pennsylvania's aging veterans
and their families and caregivers**

Aging Committee (continued)

Adult Day

- In design phase; further discussion within this committee tabled until 07/19
- Also being looked at by Joint Committee on Reducing Veterans Homelessness – where would GAC like this topic?

Expanding Veteran LTC Partnerships

- No updates

Act 69 implementation at PDA

- In progress; training for field staff forthcoming

Aging Committee (continued)

❑ **Expanding PA Link Initiatives for Aging Veterans**

- Promote communication and collaboration between CDVAs and AAAs
 - 2 more e-intros (Potter and Huntingdon); 5 total to date
- Benefits and Rights for Older Pennsylvanians books
 - 2019 supply to be mailed to SVHs, TAA and VISN 4 VAMCs
 - 2019 supply also be secured for VSOs
 - 2020 edition supply needs will be calculated to promote coverage
- DMVA and PACE meeting (held 2/6; next meeting 2/28)
 - partnership to reach veterans with info on Registry and PACE
 - education on PACE for VSOs, VISN, and community providers (VMC)
- DMVA and PA Council on Aging meeting – attempting to reschedule

Aging Committee Continued

❑ Expanding PA Link Initiatives for Aging Veterans

- Expansion of Veteran Community Partnerships in VISN:
 - Now have info for VISN4 catchment areas and VCP leads
 - Developing plan for intros between PA Link Lead Coordinators/VCP Leads
- Alzheimer's Association PA Chapters and Veterans Service Providers
 - Definite need for education on both sides due to lack of familiarity
 - Desire from Alzheimer's Association for similar meeting with VA reps
 - Potential for Alzheimer's presentation during 2019 CDVA conference
- Veterans-Directed Home & Community Based Services (Veterans Directed Care)
 - VA Pittsburgh looking at offering Veterans Directed Care
- Caregiver Support Program cross-system education
 - 1/9/19 webinar on PDA's CSP administered through local AAAs
 - 12 veterans-system participants logged in = DMVA (1) and VA (11)

Aging Committee (continued)

❑ Expanding PA Link Initiatives for Aging Veterans

- “Options in Veterans Services” online training module
 - Limited viewings (91 since 1/1/15), but solid information
 - Housed on LTLTI LMS; looking at ways to promote this resource (and the 09/17 Veterans Services webinar)
- Educate SNF/Rehabs/Senior Living Communities on Aid and Attendance Scams
 - Workgroup discussing potential of revitalizing “Don’t Pay for Your Benefits”
- Community HealthChoices (CHC)
 - Does OLTL want to partner to get info on CHC out to veterans for phase 3; e.g. presentations, webinars or info in DMVA Digest
 - Do MCOs need education on veterans systems, services and supports, or culture?

Aging Committee (continued)

❑ **Opportunities for Aging Veterans, their Family Members and Caregivers** (community involvement, socialization, outdoor activities)

Committee met on Jan. 7, 2019

Current Committee Members: PA Department of Conservation Natural Resources, PA Council on the Arts, PA Fish and Boat Commission, PA Department of Aging

How and where can we share information and resources?

- Veterans Homes Activity Directors – Webinars, staff meetings/trainings, etc...
- Veteran Newsletter – working on a schedule of submissions
 - Transition Assistance News
 - Family Assistance Center
 - DMVA Digest
 - American Legion Newsletter

Expanding Long Term Care Subcommittee: Kevin Hancock (chair), Jonathan Bowman and Darryl Jackson (co-chair)

Name	Affiliation
Kevin Hancock, chair	Deputy Secretary OLTL, DHS
Jonathan Bowman, co-chair	LIFE Program Director
Darryl Jackson, co-chair	DMVA
Susan Coble	Deputy Sec QA, DOH
Christine Miccio	Director, Bureau of Aging Services
Gail Weidman	Director of Policy PHCA
Kelly Andrisano	Director of PACAH
Vicki Hoak	CEO Pa Home Care
Anne Henry	Senior Vice President & Chief Government Affairs Officer
Nicole Pruitt	Inglis House, Pa. Adult Day Services Assoc,
Jill Vovakes	Chief of Staff OLTL
Jim Pezzuti	Principal Pezzuti Consulting

Expanding Long Term Care Subcommittee

Vision Statement

**To provide the highest quality care and services to our
Veterans and their spouses.**

Education, Employment, Workforce Development Committee

Mr. Cory Bender

Education, Employment/Workforce Development Committee (EEWFD)

Members:

Name	Affiliation
Kory Auch	Chair / Office of Administration
Jeanne Block	Department of Labor and Industry
Christine Hawk	Department of Education
Bruce Foster	State Veterans' Commission
Cory Bender	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Larry Furlong	Fish and Boat Commission
Tina Kotsalos	Department of Banking and Securities
Thomas Applebach	County Directors for Veterans Affairs
Scott Sheely	Department of Agriculture
Mike Sullivan	Office of Administration
Mike McManus	Department of Community and Economic Development
Randy Wright/Billy Lanham	Veterans' Employment and Training Service

Employment

“I want a new job”

1. PA CareerLink
2. Veterans’ Hiring

Education

“I want to go to school”

1. GI Bill
2. Education Assistance Program
3. State Grant Program

Vision: To create greater awareness and synergy among government entities that serve veterans at the point they are asking themselves ‘what do I want to do next’ as it relates to employment, self-employment, education or retraining.

Retraining

“I want a new career”

1. Apprenticeships
2. Troops to Teachers
3. Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

Third Quarter GAC-VS

Self Employment

“I want to start my own business”

1. PA Business One-Stop Shop
2. Small Business Administration
3. PA Military Finance Alliance

Fourth Quarter GAC-VS

Committee Efforts:

- Veteran Employment Dashboard
- U.S. Small Business Administration
- Veterans & Agriculture

2019 Military Day at the Farm Show





WANTED:

Candidates for Next WCO Academy
STARTING Summer 2019



The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) Bureau of Law Enforcement is seeking 20 qualified candidates for the position of Waterways Conservation Officer Trainee. The selected individuals will report for training in the Summer of 2019 and be commissioned in the Summer of 2020. Additional information can be found on PFBC's website at www.fishandboat.com or by contacting 717-709-7820. Testing information is available on the Pennsylvania Civil Service Commission's website at www.employment.pa.gov.

- Pennsylvania Residency is REQUIRED, must be 21 years of age to apply.
- Pennsylvania Driver's License is REQUIRED.
- Must pass Criminal History check.
- Starting salary of \$31,345 plus comprehensive benefits, to include Law Enforcement Retirement Program (Age 55, 25 years).
- Will attend 1 year of comprehensive training, including ACT 120 and specialized Conservation Law Enforcement programs.
- Promotion to WATERWAYS CONSERVATION OFFICER upon completion of training.
- This position allows the successful candidate to enjoy a rewarding career in Conservation Law Enforcement, protecting our aquatic resources and those who enjoy them across the Commonwealth.

DMVA Weekly Digest ... Employment Section

- Waterways Conservation Officer (Fish & Boat)
- Veteran Education Advisor (PDE)
- Veteran Employment Representatives (L&I)



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

“I WANT A NEW JOB”

1. PA CareerLink
2. Veteran Hiring

Veterans' Hiring

Concept

- PA Military Code 51 ... Chapter 71
 - Civil Service – exam points and preference
 - Non Civil Service - preference
- Qualifications – CS minimum; NCS requisite

State Participation

- Office of Administration
 - Talent Acquisition
 - Enterprise Recruitment
 - HR Delivery Centers
- Independent Agency HR Staff
- State Civil Service Commission

PA Key Data/Trends

- PA Veterans
 - 4% of PA's working age pop
 - 75% served prior to Gulf War
- Developing Standard Hiring Reports
 - Annual FY report out to TAG

Key Changes/Initiatives

- Act 71 consolidates recruit-to-hire
 - Efficient/Effective/Modernize
 - Eased for applicant & hiring manager
 - Retains state & county coverage
- NEOGOV - common system platform
 - Enables future analytics

Health and Behavioral Service Committee

Mr. Joel Mutschler
Chair

Health and Behavioral Service, Joel Mutschler, (Chair)

Members:

Name	Affiliation
Rick Hamp	Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Mike Stelacio	State Veterans' Commission
Jodi Skiles	Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
Angela Keen	VISN 4
Robert Rounce	Department of Health
Dr. Darryl Jackson	Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Mission: The Health and Behavioral Services Committee will identify health and behavioral service providers, foster relationships, and build resource awareness among service members, veterans and their families across the Commonwealth.

Vision: Connect service members, veterans, and their families regionally with health and behavioral services to improve mental well being.

Fairweather Lodge Supporting Veterans

- Venango County
- 2 in Erie County
- Cumberland/Perry (Newville)

We are seeing a number of housing options being opened by county and community partners.

These housing options usually target a specialty population.

Dr. Darryl Jackson, Chief Medical Officer, and Mr. Rick Hamp, Special Assistant to the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs, represent the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs on the CCBHC steering committee. Veterans are tracked as a priority population during intake and we are starting to track some data that should help us with basic information on emerging Veterans needs.

The CCBHC program has 310 veterans, 5 active duty and 7 national guard/reserve members enrolled.

Mental Health First Aid – Nothing significant to report

We continue to build partnerships with community organizations that are able to provide services to our Veterans with behavioral health challenges and co-occurring conditions such as Substance Use Disorders.

- New Vitae Wellness and Recovery in the Lehigh Valley (Allentown/Quakertown)
- Retreat Premier Addiction Treatment Centers – Lancaster, PA
- Strive Healthcare/Veteran-First Responder (VFR) Healthcare – Greensburg, PA
- Just For Tomorrow (JFT) Recovery House – Lemoyne, PA
- York County Prison Veteran POD – York, PA
- Allegheny County Prison Veteran POD – Allegheny, PA
- Veteran’s Recovery Home – York, PA

Service Member, Veterans and their Families Wellness Initiatives – We continue our efforts to leverage new and innovative partnerships and programs to help keep our service families well while remaining agile and flexible when responding to crisis situations. Information is power in this initiative and we continue our efforts to become subject matter experts in this information sharing arena.

- **Mental Health First Aid** – We have not been able to leverage and specific funding to support Mental Health First Aid for Veterans and their families during this State Fiscal Year (SFY). We are sharing many training opportunities that are hosted by community partners throughout the commonwealth. We have seen an increase in these training and awareness opportunities.
- **Regional Outreach Initiative** – DMVA is moving forward with its Regional Outreach Initiative. We will focus on being the information broker for resources that include local, regional, state, and federal partners to include community partners and Veteran Service Organizations.
- **Veteran Homelessness** – Homelessness among our military and veteran population continues to be a challenge. We are tracking a number of initiatives by sister Departments and agencies that are aimed at helping us address this area of concern. Pennsylvania continues to receive significant funding from the Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families (SSVF) program. Providers are changing but the resources remain stable to address this challenge within the commonwealth.

DMVA staff are being invited to participate in a March 15, 2019, webinar coordinated by representatives of the PA Departments of Health, Human Services, and Drug and Alcohol Programs. Webinar presenters will provide updates on progress made to meet the five-year goals of the November 2017 Pennsylvania State Strategy Session for Tobacco-Free Recovery and will encourage other organizations to adopt tobacco-free practices.

Opioid Use Disorder Response – Veteran Related



SAMHSA awarded \$55.9 Million in federal grant funding to combat the opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania. Of that funding the following initiatives directly relate to the Veterans' community:

- **Opioid Housing Initiative:** \$15 Million in SOR funding to DHS will fund pilot projects in eligible urban and rural communities throughout the Commonwealth to help individuals to become and remain engaged in evidence-based treatment interventions, provide individuals with the necessary support services to maintain housing stability, and provide pre-tenancy education services. Veterans are a priority population in this initiative.
- **Veterans in Crisis Outreach:** \$350,000 in SOR funding per year to support the development and implementation of regional programs focusing on the education, prevention or identification of OUDs for Pennsylvania Veterans, their families or caregivers and the identification of resources for treatment referral. This federal fiscal year DMVA is developing a communications plan to increase awareness of the resources that are available.
- **Veteran Service Officer Awareness Training:** \$50,000 in SOR funding to provide training to our Veteran Service Officers on the Opioid Crisis and our Warm Hand Off protocols. Scopes of work are under development to provide for a 30 minute online training component and to provide for a two hour training block during DMVA's annual Veteran Service Officer Training event.

DMVA has accepted an invitation to sit as a member of the commonwealths Problem Gambling Consortium. Members of this consortium include the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), the PA Lottery Commission, The Department of Agriculture (AG), the PA Gaming Control Board, the Council on Compulsive Gambling of PA and Rural PA.

This consortium meets quarterly and concentrates on emerging issues for specialty populations within the commonwealth. Areas of interest include accessibility to treatment, language barriers, outreach, treatment, prevention, training.

The next meeting Consortium meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2019.

Joint Committee on Homelessness

Mr. Joel Mutschler
Co-Chair

Vision: The Joint Committee on Homelessness will collaborate with federal, state, local government, and community partners to identify and build resource awareness for veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

☐ Reducing Veteran Homelessness

Joint Committee met on:

- 12/4 and 1/8 via Skype
- email meeting for February

Most recent task: Asked all Joint Committee members to think about what databases and resource guides or gatekeepers they may know of to help inform DMVA's regionalization plan. Some examples include:

- 211 databases
- PA Link Call Center or Link to Community Care Website
- PA Link partnership listings
- County-based resource guides housed on DOH website
- Regional Housing Coordinators are a wealth of information about local level
- Do departments have access to a guide or listing of applicable resources?

❑ Reducing Veteran Homelessness

Workgroups:

Transitional Housing

- Continue to work on goals (shortening time in transitional housing; identifying new resources of permanent housing; community asset map; gauging housing first model adherence)

Cross-System Collaboration and Resource Inventory

- Compiling resource ideas for regionalization plan resource guide as requested

Adult Day and LIFE programs

- DMVA continues to visit LIFE sites and learn more

*** Getting closer to declaring functional zero for the Commonwealth***

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, January 2018 Point in Time Count estimates **200 Pennsylvania Veterans** were homeless.

Women Veterans Committee

Ms. Crystal Petery

Women Veterans Committee, Chair Jodi Zucco

Members	Affiliation
Jodi Zucco	U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Retired
Constance Snavelly	State Veterans' Commission, U.S. Army Retired
JoAnn Tresco	Service Members and Family Support Branch, PA Army National Guard , Veteran Retired
Audrey Bergstresser	Vietnam Veterans of American, Inc., Service Officer, U.S. Army Retired
Lisa Kaye	County Directors for Veterans Affairs, U.S. Army Veteran
Patricia Conroy	Women Veterans Program Manager, Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center
Rhonda Smith	Air Force Veteran- Veteran small business owner
Althea Cirillo	Mentor with Veterans' Court of Dauphin County, USAR Retired

Women Veterans Committee (Continued)

Mission: ***Women Veterans Outreach, Women Veterans focus in Annual Veteran Symposium, Identify emerging needs, Identify Gaps in benefits, programs and services for Women Veterans***

Critical Need: Identify Issues of Unique Concern to PA Women Veterans

Barrier: Lack of Input from our Target Population (in excess of 60,000 female veterans)

Mitigation:

- Develop and Disseminate a Questionnaire
- Town hall Meetings and Expos
- Supplemental Information, Academic Research and Studies

Women Veterans Committee (Continued)

Executive Summary, Questionnaire Findings :

- 761 survey responses, hundreds of comments
- Demographics (in order of highest reported): Branch/Component, County, Ethnicity, Age/Service Era, Years of Service, Combat Service, Disability, Employment/Marital Status
- Top issues identified: gender bias, access to medical care and Veterans benefits at every level, and lack of inclusiveness in Veterans Organizations.

Working Group, Additional Survey Analysis (Zucco, Snavely, Cirillo):

- Drafting templates based upon questions triggering responses unique to PA Women Veterans to link to demographics
- Test proposed template prior to fielding

Women Veterans Committee (Continued)

Next Town Hall and Expo (Pittsburgh):

- Veterans Multi-Service Center (VMSC) and VA Support
- Date May 2019
- Status, Planning Stage (DMVA Outreach and Re-integration, Zucco, and Conroy)
- Theme “I’m Not Invisible”

Other Initiatives (Working Groups):

- Vision Statement (Kaye/Conroy)-on Committee Agenda Emphasis Networking and Outreach Future
- Reporting of Individual Committee Initiatives (Tresco): Muncy (Tresco) and Paralyzed Veterans of America Logo (Snively)
- Networking (Bergstresser/Smith) identify Women Veterans Groups Statewide for purposes of contact and collaboration

Judiciary Committee

Mr. Ryan Yoder
Chair

Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

Members:

Name	Affiliation
Ryan Yoder	PA Department of Corrections (DOC)
Nicholas “Chip” Gilliland	PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)
Richard Podguski	PA Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP)
Terry Stokes	Veterans Court Advocate- (PA VFW)
Ward Adams	GAC-VS (Member at Large)
Carl Feldman	Department of Human Services
Norm Marden	Office of the Attorney General NEW MEMBER
Andy Simpson	Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) NEW MEMBER

Judiciary Committee (Continued)

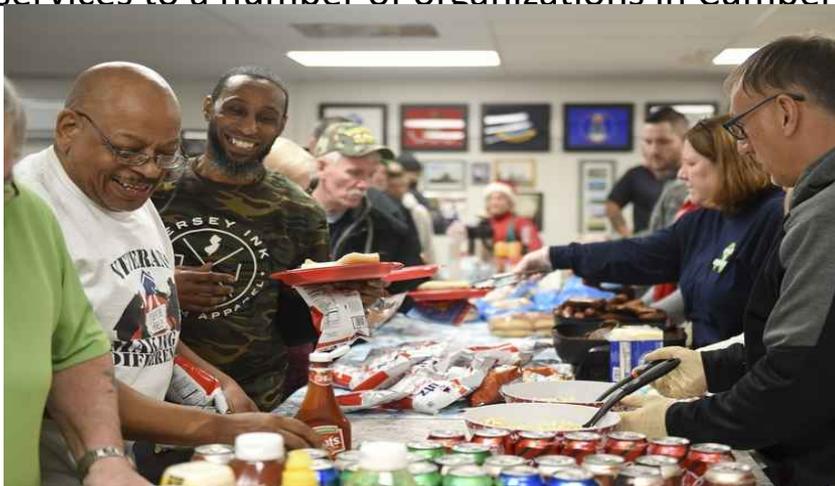
MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Judiciary Committee is to build productive and sustaining relationships with GAC-VS committee members and other veteran-related organizations in order to collaborate and expand services and support for justice-involved veterans in such a way to promote public safety, reduce recidivism and costs while improving the lives of veterans, their families, and our communities. All veterans deserve the opportunity to be identified, educated and provided services and support regardless of background and circumstance. We will leave no veteran behind.

Judiciary Committee (Continued)

Volunteering for Veterans

Twenty-four members of the Department of Corrections' leadership team joined forces on Dec. 18 to serve lunch to approximately 40 veterans at Veterans Making a Difference/ Paul R. Gordon Veteran Social Center in Reading, Pa. In addition to serving lunch, the group spent quality time visiting with the veterans, and they also delivered a variety of items for use at the center and by the veterans. The group of volunteers also took a moving truck full of employee-donated items – food, clothing and other basic needs and essentials to the center. Last year, DOC employees provided a day of volunteer services to a number of organizations in Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster and York counties.

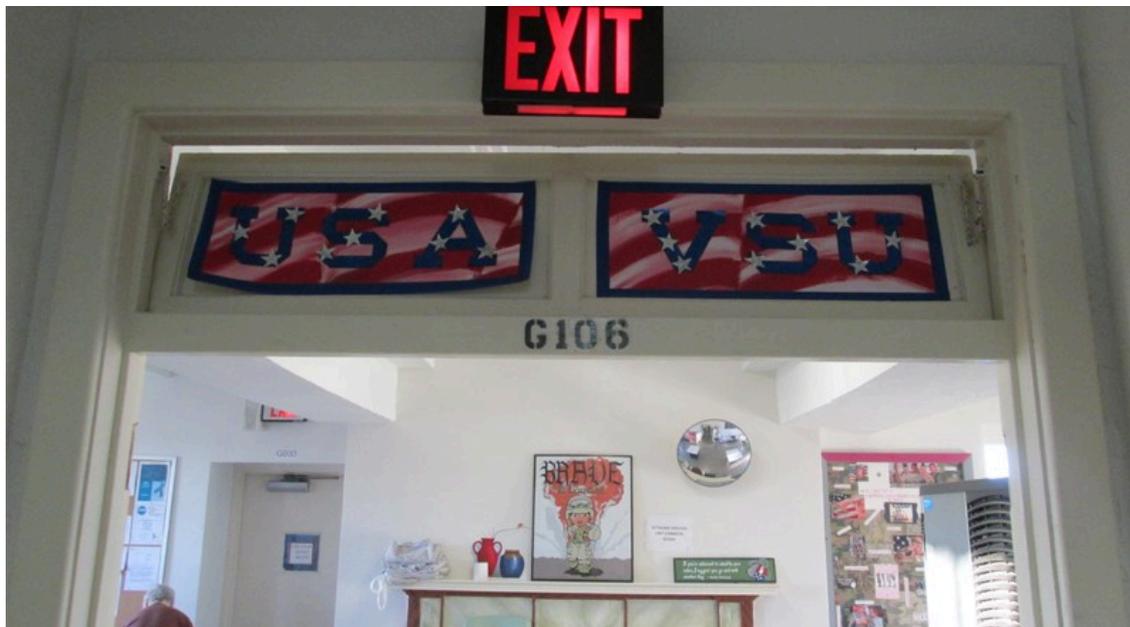


Judiciary Committee (Continued)

CorrectionalNEWS design+construction+operations [Featured Articles](#)

Pennsylvania DOC Opens First Female Veterans Housing Unit

January 30, 2019, Aziza Jackson, Department of Corrections, DOC, SCI, State Correctional Institute Muncy



<http://correctionalnews.com/2019/01/30/pennsylvania-doc-opens-first-female-veterans-housing-unit/>

Judiciary Committee (Continued)

SCI Phoenix VSU Update



Judiciary Committee (Continued)

Allegheny County Veteran Reentry Program Update: Mr. Podguski

- Conducted analyses to determine number of veterans and project scope
 - Identified Minimum Dates 12/2018 thru 12/2019 = 33 from Allegheny
 - 15 with Maximum Dates 2019 thru 2021 (of the 33 from Allegheny)
 - 10 Currently in SCI Mercer with 2019 Minimum Dates
 - 3 with Maximum Dates in 2019 (of the 10 from Allegheny)

- Next Steps
 - Outreach to Allegheny County officials for additional meetings
 - Determine DOC/PBPP level of involvement
 - Discuss service delivery/involvement from Veterans Court
 - Brief official at SCI Mercer and inmate population

Judiciary Committee (Continued)

PA Veterans Court Update: Mr. Simpson

- **25%** increase in the number of PA Veterans Courts in 2019. Four new VTCs include: Armstrong, Lycoming, Lebanon, Indiana, Westmoreland Counties.
- **196** successful graduates in 2017. See pacourts.us → News & Statistics → Research & Statistics
- Statewide VTC strategic planning will be conducted by Center for Court Innovation in 2019.
- Annual Problem-Solving Court Coordinators Symposium will be held May 6-8 in Hershey.
- Operational tune-up training (Sept. 5-6) for Carbon, Montgomery, & Lackawanna Counties.
- PA Veteran Courts annual event @ Widener Commonwealth Law School – September 2019
- Inaugural VJO Workshop hosted by AOPC on Nov. 2, 2018. 2nd annual planned for Nov. 1, 2019.
- Volunteer Veteran Mentors – Mentor Bootcamp coming in 2019/2020 – Stay tuned.

Judiciary Committee (Continued)



Pennsylvania's Veterans Courts Make a Difference for Veterans:

HARRISBURG—Pennsylvania's veteran population ranks fourth in the U.S. with 819,185 veterans as of 2017. Since 2009, Pennsylvania's Veterans Courts have been assisting veterans who are charged with crimes and are struggling with addiction, mental illness or co-occurring disorders.

Veterans Court participants appear before a judge on a regular basis; receive support and guidance from veteran mentors; and get treatment to address underlying problems often caused by post-traumatic stress disorder. In 2017, 196 out of 284 veterans graduated from this specialty court, which is a 73 percent successful graduation rate. A high-resolution file of the graphic is available for download at www.pacourts.us under *Media Resources*.

What are veterans courts?

Veterans courts assist veterans who are charged with crimes and are struggling with addiction, mental illness or co-occurring disorders. Veterans court participants:

- 1) Appear before the judge on a regular basis
- 2) Gain support and guidance from veteran mentors
- 3) Receive supervision by specialized probation officers
- 4) Get treatment and support to address underlying problems often caused by post-traumatic stress disorder
- 5) Work closely with the VA Veterans Justice Outreach coordinators



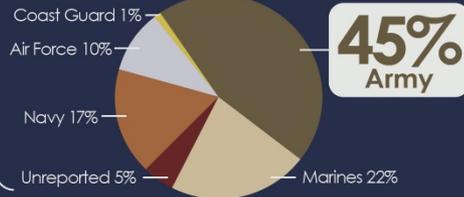
819,185
total veterans in
Pennsylvania (2017)

Pennsylvania's
veteran
population
ranks
4th
in the
United States

The first
veterans
court
opened in
Lackawanna
County
in 2009

284 admissions
in 2017

They came from the following branches of service:



20 veterans courts in Pennsylvania
were active in 2017.
(Common Pleas)

14 counties have veterans
diversion programs
(Magisterial District Judge)

196 graduated
in 2017.
That's a **73%** successful
graduation
rate.



Technology Committee

Ms. Sandra Patterson
Chair

OA/IT Subcommittee - Sandy Patterson, HHS Delivery Center CIO, Chair

Name	Affiliation
Eric Felty	DMVA – Project Manager
Tim Irvin	DMVA – IT Director DMVA
Richard Hamp	DMVA – Special Assistant to Deputy Adjutant General of Veteran Affairs
Joe Smolok	DMVA
Brian Natali	DMVA
Christine Hawk	PDE
Susan Leevan	IES/SAP
Robert Rounce	DOH
Ryan Yoder	DOC
Penni Bernard	PennDOT
Steven Wolf	L&I
Kory Auch	OA
Reid Walsh	OA
Jason, Swarthout	OA
Jordan, Rummel	OA

Veterans Registry Statistics

Quarter	Counts
Q1	1,090
Q2	1,175
Q3	1,715
Q4	2,404
2018 Total	6,384
Total as of 02/07/2019	19,128

Project Updates

- DMVA is working with PAI and Dept of State and to evaluate the potential of using the Registry as a gateway for people to Register to Vote. This potential project is in its early stages with more to come at future conferences.
- Database and reporting changes of Veterans Registry 2 project complete on 02/07/19.

Suicide Prevention-Peer (SPPEER) Committee

Mr. Rick Hamp
Chair

Suicide Prevention-Peer (SPPEER) Committee, Rick Hamp (Chair)

Members:

Name	Affiliation
Rick Hamp	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Mark Todero	Pennsylvania National Guard
Joann Tresco	SM&FS/Alcohol & Drug Control Officer (PANG)
VACANT	Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Angela Keen, Ph.D.	Veterans Integrated Service Network, Mental Health Program Lead
VACANT	Department of Labor & Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Fred Nardei	VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Certified Forensic Peer Specialist
Ryan Yoder	Department of Corrections, Statewide Veteran Coordinator
Dave Measel	Pennsylvania Peer Support Coalition
Donald Danser, Ph.D.	Department of Veterans Affairs, Manager, BH VA and Specialty Clinics



VA National Suicide Data Report for 2005-2016: Key Points

- From 2015 to 2016, the overall Veteran suicide count decreased from 6,281 to 6,079 deaths and the Veteran unadjusted suicide rate decreased from 30.5/100,000 to 30.1/100,000.
- The frequency of firearm use as a method of suicide remains high. In 2016, the percent of suicide deaths that involved firearms was 69.4 percent.
- In 2016, rates of suicide were highest among younger Veterans (ages 18–34) and lowest among older Veterans (age 55 and older). Veterans age 55 and older nonetheless accounted for 58.1 percent of Veteran suicide deaths in 2016.
- The rate of suicide among Veterans who did recently receive VHA services is increasing at a slower pace than the rate of suicide among Veterans who did not recently receive VHA services.



Important Figures



The rate of suicide was

1.8 *times higher among female Veterans*

compared with non-Veteran adult women.

* after accounting for differences in age



The rate of suicide was

1.4 *times higher among male Veterans*

compared with non-Veteran adult men.

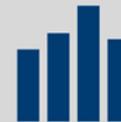
* after accounting for differences in age



Male Veterans ages

18–34

experienced the highest rates of suicide.



Male Veterans ages

55 and older

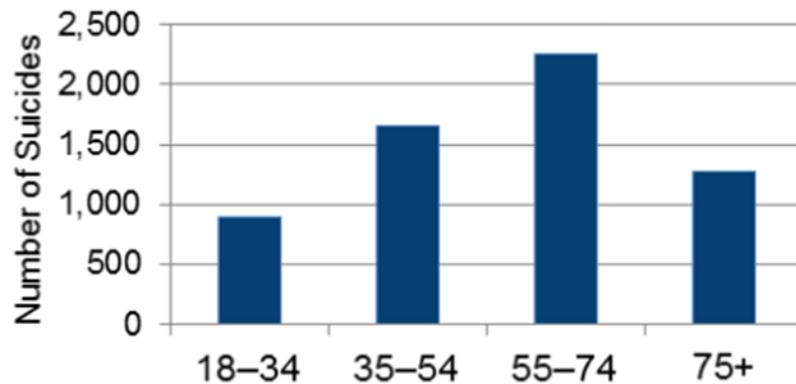
had the highest count of suicide.

69% *of all Veteran suicide deaths resulted from a firearm injury.*

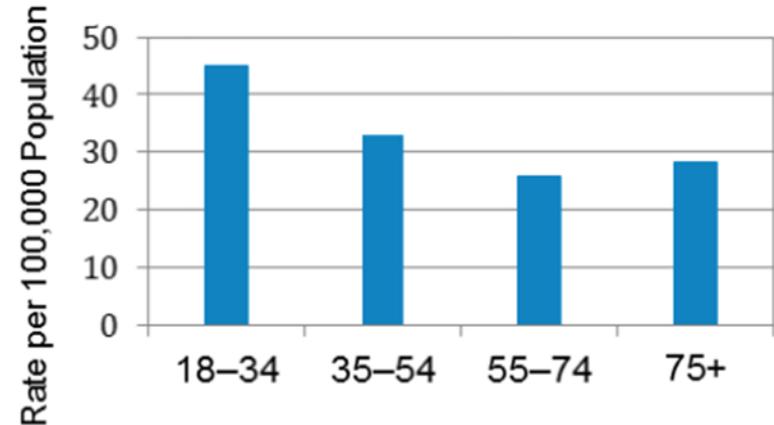


Veteran Suicide Deaths: Count vs. Rate

Veteran Suicide Deaths in 2016



Older Veteran population accounts for the bulk of suicide deaths due to population size.



Younger Veteran population includes more recently transitioned Veterans and has a higher rate of suicide.



Current efforts underway within VA:

- Creating new cross-sector partnerships to involve peers, family members, state partners and the community
- Expanding the Veterans Crisis Line to three call centers to provide 24/7 support
- Suicide Prevention Coordinators at every VA medical center
- Launching the S.A.V.E. online suicide prevention video to help everyone play a role in preventing Veteran suicide
- Launching the REACH VET (Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health -- Veterans Enhanced Treatment) predictive analytics program to identify Veterans who may be at risk for suicide
- Expanding access to mental health care
- Partnering with the departments of Defense and Homeland Security, to support Veterans during their transition from military to civilian life



VA MISSION ACT of 2018

The VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act

To establish a permanent community care program for veterans, to establish a commission for the purpose of making recommendations regarding the modernization or realignment of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration, to improve construction of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to the home loan program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2372/text>

TITLE I—CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

Subtitle A—Developing an Integrated High-Performing Network

CHAPTER 1—ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMS

CHAPTER 2—PAYING PROVIDERS AND IMPROVING COLLECTIONS

CHAPTER 3—EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

CHAPTER 4—OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVIDERS

CHAPTER 5—OTHER NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE MATTERS

TITLE II—VA ASSET AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

TITLE III—IMPROVEMENTS TO RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE IN UNDERSERVED AREAS

TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS



Guiding Principals of the State Suicide Prevention Plan.

- Clearly identifies our military and veteran population as an “at risk” population
- Modeled after the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention
- Goals and Objectives are clearly stated and followed with action steps that can be Tailored to meet the need.
 - Culturally and developmentally appropriate
 - Eliminate health care, race, ethnic, gender, education, income, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and geographic disparities
 - Early interventions to promote protective factors and reduce risk factors
 - Endorse suicide prevention as “Everyone’s Business.”
 - Promote “Zero Suicides” as an aspirational goal
 - Promote “People First” language and wellness
 - Advocate for, invest in and sustain all Suicide Prevention Efforts.



VA MISSION ACT of 2018

The VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act

To establish a permanent community care program for veterans, to establish a commission for the purpose of making recommendations regarding the modernization or realignment of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration, to improve construction of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to the home loan program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2372/text>

TITLE I—CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

Subtitle A—Developing an Integrated High-Performing Network

CHAPTER 1—ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMS

CHAPTER 2—PAYING PROVIDERS AND IMPROVING COLLECTIONS

CHAPTER 3—EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

CHAPTER 4—OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVIDERS

CHAPTER 5—OTHER NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE MATTERS

TITLE II—VA ASSET AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

TITLE III—IMPROVEMENTS TO RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE IN UNDERSERVED AREAS

TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS



MISSION ACT 2018 SEC. 506.

PROGRAM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF PEER SPECIALISTS IN PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM SETTINGS WITHIN MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program to establish not fewer than two peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs to promote the use and integration of services for mental health, substance use disorder, and behavioral health in a primary care setting.

TIMEFRAME FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out the program at medical centers of the Department as follows:

Not later than May 31, 2019, at not fewer than 15 medical centers of the Department.

Not later than May 31, 2020, at not fewer than 30 medical centers of the Department.

SELECTION OF LOCATIONS.— The Secretary shall select medical centers for the program as follows:

Not fewer than five shall be medical centers of the Department that are designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.

Not fewer than 10 shall be medical centers of the Department that are not designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.



MISSION ACT 2018 SEC. 506.

PROGRAM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF PEER SPECIALISTS IN PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM SETTINGS WITHIN MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

CONSIDERATIONS.— The Secretary shall consider the feasibility and advisability of selecting medical centers in the following areas:

Rural areas and other areas that are underserved by the Department.

Areas that are not in close proximity to an active duty military installation.

Areas representing different geographic locations, such as census tracts established by the Bureau of the Census.

GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES.— The Secretary shall ensure that:

The needs of female veterans are specifically considered and addressed; and female peer specialists are made available to female Veterans who are treated at each location.

ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY PROVIDERS.— The Secretary shall consider ways in which peer specialists can conduct outreach to health care providers in the community who are known to be serving veterans to engage with those providers and veterans served by those providers.



Overview of the State Suicide Prevention Plan Goals.

- Reduce access to lethal means for those identified as a suicide risk
- Provide training on the prevention of suicide across multiple sectors and settings
- Promote screening that includes health care, behavioral health and educational settings
- Provide care and support to individuals affected by suicide deaths, promote healing, Implement community strategies to prevent further suicide
- Improve data reporting systems, along with the ability to collect , analyze and use the data
- Promote Responsible Media Reporting on suicide



Resources Available within SMFS

- Family Assistance Center Specialists / Family Readiness Support Assistant
 - FACS
 - FRSA: Their goal is to empower and connect military families with the tools and skills they need to successfully meet the challenges of the military lifestyle. They support Family Readiness Groups and family volunteers through training and hands on assistance so that FRG's can provide a positive, supportive environment and a vehicle for official information can be shared with families via the command.
- Transition Assistance Advisors (TAAs)
 - The purpose of the Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) Program is to provide education concerning benefits (Federal, State, County) and assistance to veterans, those currently serving (all branches and components) and their immediate family members. The TAAs are networked into the Veteran's Administration, PA Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs, County Directors for Military Affairs, National Guard Service member assistance programs and various community resources to ensure timely assistance with benefits and healthcare. We pride ourselves with the amount of outreach we perform across the state to ensure information concerning benefits reach the veterans, service and family members.
 - POC: Andy Charpentier - Email: william.a.charpentier2.ctr@mail.mil, Phone: (717) 861-2813 Katie Johnson - Email: Catherine.a.johnson4.ctr@mail.mil, Phone: (717) 861-8706



Resources Available within SMFS

- Behavioral Health Services
 - 4 PHC's across the state
- Alcohol and Drug Services:
 - The PAARNG Substance Abuse team will provide Soldiers with assistance in obtaining substance abuse evaluations and treatment, conduct substance abuse prevention training at the unit level, and assist with Mitigating Strategies at the Command level.
 - Alcohol and Drug Services are available to Service Members AND they SAP team will assist Veterans and their families as well.
- Citizen Soldier for Life (CSFL)
 - My main focus is to help RSP soldiers, find employment, but we are open to helping, Soldiers, Sailors, Airman, Spouses and immediate family find employment. We help them with making a functional resume and cover letter.



Upcoming Training and Education Opportunities

*Warm-Hand Off Opioid Survivors Initiative– Multi-Agency Task Force addressing the Opioid Crisis in PA. Round 2 of Warm Hand-Off Seminars are underway on various dates and locations throughout the commonwealth.

QPR Instructor Training on March 15, 2019 in Harrisburg PA. This training is sponsored by Prevent Suicide PA and has a registration fee.



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Regionalization Initiative Update

As of March 20, 2019

OUTREACH



- DMVA Involvement:
 - Formal Outreach Mission

- Current Program:
 - 2 Outreach Vans
 - Attendance at some Veterans events
 - Outreach at some venues (Cabelas) Central PA

- Proposed:
 - Regionalize efforts (5 Regions)
 - Formalize partnerships with CDVA, Serv Orgs, State Depts, 501(c)(3)s
 - Identify sources in DMVA Database by County

- Resources Required:
 - 5 VSOs (re-purposed from PIRO or Budget Add)
 - 3 Personnel slots from BVH

REGIONAL PLAN BENEFITS



- Establishing simple database (spreadsheet) information by County
- Creates access organized access to information
- Promotes organized use of information
- Promotes access to additional resources (manpower)
- Promotes access to additional funding
- Promotes organized crosstell between all agencies and orgs
- Promotes deconfliction of events/ programs

REGIONALIZATION PROJECT PROGRESS



Working Group Project Plan

- Key Elements for Regionalization Identified Completed
- Project Charter Approved Completed
- Project Scope Defined Short-term & Long term Completed
- Work Breakdown Structure Developed Completed
- Risk Assessment Completed Completed
- Piloting Region 5 for Proof of Concept In-Progress

Reassign Region Staff (Planning Phase)

- Assigned Project Managers Completed
- Veteran Service Officer Reassigned Completed
- Developing Position Descriptions for Regional Staff In-Progress
 - VSO
 - VSS
 - Social Worker/Case Manager
- Develop Business Need Document Completed
- Develop Talking Point Paper In-Progress
- Develop Reports In-Progress
- Determine Data Collection In-Progress
- Create Metrics for Performance In-Progress
- Define Proof of Concept In-Progress



- Open Discussion
- Questions/Remarks

Wednesday, May 15, 2019 at 1:00 PM

**Arrowheads Community Club
Building 9-65, Fort Indiantown Gap
Annville, PA**

location subject to change